



## Strengthening Sustainable Tourism Development Policy and Implementation in Batu Tourism City

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### ABSTRACT

The study employs a mixed methods approach, combining quantitative data from 120 respondents (tourists, business actors, and local communities) with qualitative data from 30 in-depth interviews and focus group discussions involving government officials, entrepreneurs, community representatives, and academics. Analysis includes multiple linear regression and thematic interpretation. The findings reveal that six independent variables significantly influence sustainable tourism: Public Policy & Good Governance, Economic Contribution, Social Contribution, Environmental Conservation, Business Strategy & Collaboration, and Sustainability Management. The regression model explains 68.4% of the variance ( $R^2 = 0.684$ ), with Sustainability Management emerging as the most dominant factor ( $\beta = 0.275$ ). The study concludes that an integrative approach—grounded in Triple Bottom Line, Good Governance, and Quadruple Helix frameworks—is essential to achieving inclusive, sustainable, and collaborative tourism development.

## INTRODUCTION

Tourism has now developed into one of the strategic sectors in economic, social, and environmental development in Indonesia. In addition to contributing to foreign exchange earnings, this sector also creates jobs and encourages the growth of small and medium-sized businesses. Based on data from the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (Kemenparekraf, 2024), tourism contributes around 3.6% to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employs more than 12.8 million workers. This situation highlights the need for a shift towards sustainable tourism so that tourism growth is not only economically oriented, but also takes into account social justice and environmental sustainability.

The concept of sustainable tourism is now an important agenda in global development. This is in line with the commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 8 on decent work and economic growth, Goal 11 on sustainable cities and communities, and Goal 13 on climate action. In Indonesia, tourism plays an important role in strengthening the regional economy, creating jobs, and preserving local cultural values. However, the development of this sector also has negative impacts such as pressure on the environment, spatial changes, and an increasing need for transparent, accountable, and participatory destination management so that the benefits can be felt evenly by all levels of society.

The tourist city of Batu in East Java is one example of a rapidly growing tourist destination in recent years. With its natural wealth of mountains, agrotourism, and a variety of modern attractions, this city has become a major draw for both domestic and foreign tourists. According to data from the Batu Tourism City Central Statistics Agency (BPS), the population in mid-2024 reached around 225,408 people. This number shows the importance of inclusive tourism management so that the local community can enjoy the economic benefits generated.

The trend of tourist visits to Batu City has continued to increase significantly over the past three years. In 2022, there were around 8 million visits, increasing to 9.6 million in 2023, and reaching 10.875 million in 2024. According to an official report from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), the total number of tourist visits in 2024 reached 11,005,189 people, consisting of 10,983,568 domestic tourists and 21,621 foreign tourists. Most of the visits were to tourist attractions and accommodations. Although the target for 2025 has been raised to 11.55 million visits, by mid-year, the realization had only reached 2.29 million tourists. This gap reflects the need for promotional and management strategies that are more adaptive to changes in tourism trends and visitor behavior.

The rapid increase in tourists has had a double impact on the tourist city of Batu. On the positive side, the tourism sector has become the main driver of Local Own-Source Revenue (PAD), with a realization of Rp64.8 billion as of March 2025, or around 20.8% of the annual target. The main sources of PAD come from taxes on hotels, restaurants, entertainment, as well as parking and tourism service fees. However, this contribution is seasonal as it is highly dependent on long holiday periods. On the negative side, the increase in tourists has caused various problems such as traffic congestion, increased waste volume, land use

change, environmental degradation, and economic inequality between large businesses and local communities.

Based on the explanation above, this research has two urgencies simultaneously. First, from an academic perspective, this study enriches the literature on sustainable tourism by emphasizing the integration of sustainable tourism theory (Triple Bottom Line), public policy theory, and tourism business strategy theory. Second, from a practical perspective, the results of this study can also provide strategic recommendations for the Batu Tourism City Government to optimize tourism potential in an inclusive, competitive, and sustainable manner. In addition, this study fully supports the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 8 (*Decent Work and Economic Growth*), Goal 11 (*Sustainable Cities and Communities*), and Goal 13 (*Climate Action*).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *The Concept of Sustainable Tourism*

Sustainable tourism is a development concept that integrates the needs of tourists, businesses, the environment, and local communities while considering long-term sustainability. According to the UNWTO (2023) and Syaipudin (2023), sustainable tourism must balance economic, social, and environmental aspects so that its benefits are felt across generations. Elkington (1997), through the Triple Bottom Line framework, emphasizes the importance of balancing profit (economic), people (social), and planet (environment). Research by Gössling & Hall (2019) shows that applying this principle increases the competitiveness of destinations while maintaining environmental quality. In Indonesia, Suwena & Widyatmaja (2017) and Kusumawardhani (2020) emphasize that the success of sustainable tourism depends on local community participation and environmental awareness. Thus, this concept is highly relevant to be applied in Batu Tourism City, which is facing environmental pressures due to rapid tourism growth.

### *Theoretical Framework*

Sustainable tourism is a concept of tourism development that integrates the needs of tourists, businesses, the environment, and local communities while considering long-term sustainability. According to the UNWTO (2023), sustainable tourism must balance economic, social, and environmental dimensions so that its benefits are felt across generations. Elkington (1997), through the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) framework, emphasizes the importance of balancing profit, people, and planet. Gössling & Hall (2019) add that the application of this concept can increase the competitiveness of destinations while maintaining environmental quality. In Indonesia, Suwena & Widyatmaja (2017) and Kusumawardhani (2020) found that the success of sustainable tourism is greatly influenced by the participation of local communities and the environmental awareness of business actors and tourists, making it relevant for areas such as Batu City, which faces environmental pressures due to tourism growth.

### ***Public Policy in Tourism Development***

Public policy plays an important role in directing tourism development in line with the principles of sustainability. According to Howlett & Ramesh (2003), the policy cycle includes the stages of formulation, implementation, evaluation, and termination, which form the basis for designing tourism policies in the form of regulations, programs, incentives, and supervision. Hall (2008) emphasizes that good tourism governance is characterized by transparency, accountability, effectiveness, and community participation. In Indonesia, this policy is supported by Law Number 10 of 2009 concerning Tourism and the 2020–2024 National Medium-Term Development Plan, which emphasizes a balance between economic growth, cultural preservation, and environmental conservation. However, research by Wiranatha (2019) and Dewi (2021) shows that policy implementation is often hampered by weak coordination among stakeholders, limited human resources, minimal funding, and low public participation, as is the case in the tourist city of Batu, which still faces challenges in implementing its vision of sustainable tourism.

### ***Business Strategy in Tourism***

The sustainability of tourism depends not only on policy, but also on the business strategies implemented by industry players. Porter (1980), through the Five Forces framework, explains that tourism competitiveness is influenced by industry competition, the bargaining power of suppliers and buyers, as well as the threat of new entrants and substitute products. Ritchie & Crouch (2003) add that innovation, product differentiation, and a balance between economics and the environment are key to destination competitiveness. In line with this, Carayannis & Campbell (2009), through the Quadruple Helix Model, emphasize the importance of collaboration between the government, academics, business actors, and the community in building an innovative ecosystem. Studies by Putra (2020) in Bali and Sari (2022) in Yogyakarta prove that cross-actor collaboration can improve destination governance and attractiveness. Locally, Rosyidi & Sungkawati (2025) in Sustainability Management and Digital Innovation assert that digital technologies such as big data, destination applications, and digital payment systems are important instruments for efficiency, transparency, and competitiveness.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This research was conducted using a mixed methods research design with an explanatory sequential approach. This design was chosen because the study aims not only to measure the quantitative relationships between variables but also to gain a deep understanding of the context, meaning, policy implications, and the strategies of stakeholders in the development of sustainable tourism in Batu Tourism City.

The data analysis techniques in this study are divided into two main categories, namely quantitative analysis and qualitative analysis. The selection of these techniques is adapted to the mixed methods approach used, thereby allowing the researchers to gain a comprehensive understanding of the optimization of sustainable tourism potential in the City of Batu Tourism. Qualitative data analysis was conducted using a thematic analysis approach,

which allows researchers to identify patterns and meanings from interview data, FGDs, observations, and document reviews. In the quantitative stage, data analysis was conducted through several procedures, including descriptive analysis, regression analysis, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), and moderation testing.

## RESEARCH RESULT

This study each statistical finding must be summarized and presented in tables or graphs, as follows:

### Gender

Terms of gender, the majority of respondents are female, accounting for around 54.5%, while males make up 45.5%. This comparison indicates that both men and women are actively involved in tourism activities, although there is a slight dominance of the female group.

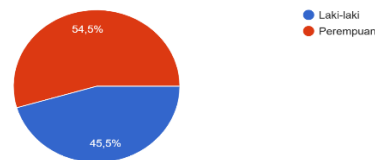


Figure 3.1 Distribution of Respondents Based on Gender

### Age

Terms of age, the majority of respondents are in the 31-50 year age range (63.6%), followed by the over 50 age group (27.3%). Respondents aged 20-30 years accounted for 9.1%. This indicates that the majority of tourists and visitors in Batu City Tourism are in the age category that is active socio-economically.

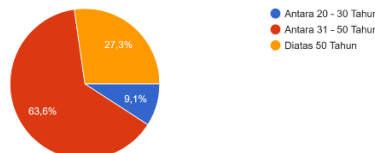


Figure 3.2 Distribution of Respondents Based on Age

### Education

Terms of education, the respondents of this study were quite diverse. Most had completed high school or an equivalent (37.5%) and Diploma/Bachelor's degree (41.7%), while those with a junior high school education or equivalent constituted 12.5%, and those with postgraduate education (Master's degree and above) made up 8.3%. This suggests that tourism in Batu City involves residents with a relatively good educational background, meaning that the perceptions provided are based on a sufficient level of knowledge.

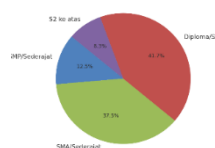


Figure 3.3 Distribution of Respondents Based on Education

### Multiple Linear Regression Test

The determine both the simultaneous and partial effects, multiple linear regression was conducted. The analysis results are presented in Table 3.4.

**Table 3.4 Results of Multiple Linear Regression Test**

| Variable                                | Coefficient ( $\beta$ ) | t_count | Sig.  | Description                |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------|-------|----------------------------|
| X1<br>Public Policy & Good Governance   | 0,18                    | 2,45    | 0,016 | Significant                |
| X2<br>Economic Contribution             | 0,22                    | 3,12    | 0,002 | Significant                |
| X3<br>Social Contribution               | 0,11                    | 1,95    | 0,054 | Not significant (marginal) |
| X4<br>Environmental Conservation        | 0,19                    | 2,76    | 0,007 | Significant                |
| X5<br>Business Strategy & Collaboration | 0,20                    | 2,88    | 0,005 | Significant                |
| X6<br>Sustainability Management         | 0,24                    | 3,35    | 0,001 | Signifikan                 |

- F Test:
- $F_{\text{calculated}} = 35.42$ ; Sig. = 0.000 ( $<0.05$ )  $\rightarrow$  the model is significant simultaneously. Coefficient of Determination ( $R^2$ ):
- $R^2 = 0.67 \rightarrow 67\%$  of the variation in sustainable tourism can be explained by variables X1–X6.

These results reinforce the descriptive data in the table. Variable X6 (sustainability management) has the most dominant influence on Y, consistent with the previously high mean value and highest correlation. Variable X2 (economic contribution) is also significant, indicating that economic impact is an important pillar of sustainability. Conversely, X3 (social contribution) is not statistically significant, although narratively (interview/FGD results) it still holds meaningful importance in the context of culture and community participation.

### Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics depict the tendencies of respondents' answers. The analysis results indicate that the majority of respondents consider the public policies in Batu Tourism City to be fairly good, the economic contribution of tourism is high, social participation is fairly active, yet environmental conservation still faces challenges.

**Table 3.5 Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables**

| Variable                                 | Mean | Standard Deviation | Category |
|------------------------------------------|------|--------------------|----------|
| X1<br>Public Policy & Good Governance    | 3,82 | 0,64               | Good     |
| X2<br>Economic Contribution              | 4,05 | 0,58               | High     |
| X3<br>Social Contribution                | 3,76 | 0,61               | Good     |
| X4<br>Environmental Conservation         | 3,42 | 0,72               | enough   |
| X5<br>Business Strategy & Collaboration  | 3,88 | 0,67               | Good     |
| X6<br>Sustainability Management          | 3,95 | 0,63               | Good     |
| Y<br>Optimization of Sustainable Tourism | 3,85 | 0,60               | Good     |

## DISCUSSION

This discussion integrates the results of quantitative analysis (questionnaires distributed to 120 respondents) with qualitative findings (interviews, FGDs, observations in 30 institutions/ groups), and then relates them to theory and previous research findings. The presentation of the discussion is organized according to the formulation of the problem and the research hypotheses.

### **Tourism Policy and Good Governance (X1 → Y)**

Quantitative analysis in the research Regression tests show that X1 has a significant effect on Y ( $\beta=0.18$ ; Sig.=0.016). The correlation is also strongly positive ( $r=0.62$ ). This proves the hypothesis that tourism policies based on good governance play an important role in developing sustainable tourism.

Qualitative analysis in the research interviews with the Tourism Office of Batu City revealed that policies are often already documented in the RIPPDA plan, but their implementation has been inconsistent due to budget constraints and inter-departmental coordination. The village tourism community feels that their participation is beginning to be accommodated, but it is not yet comprehensive.

Practical implications is transparency in the formulation of tourism policies and regulations in Batu Tourist City is expected by the public, so that the level of public participation, especially from the tourism community, increases and produces regulations with high legitimacy. Therefore, the Batu Tourist City Government needs to broaden public consultation forums before policies are implemented.

There is still no regulation protecting the residents of Batu Tourism City in developing Tourism Villages, forcing them to compete with large-scale tourism industries. Therefore, the Batu Tourism City Government can promptly issue

regulations by gathering public aspirations and involving Tourism Village managers in order to implement Tourism Equity in Batu Tourism City.

#### **Economic Contribution (X2 → Y)**

Quantitative analysis in the research X2 has the second strongest coefficient ( $\beta=0.22$ ; Sig.=0.002;  $r=0.71$ ). The descriptive mean value is also high (4.05), indicating respondents' perception that tourism has a tangible impact on regional revenue, employment, and MSMEs.

Qualitative analysis in the research FGDs with culinary MSME groups showed that the surge of tourists during the holiday season increased family income by up to 50%. However, they also faced issues with rising raw material prices and fierce product competition.

One of the respondents provided another answer about Batu Tourism City, which proclaims itself as a tourism city, should pay more attention to village tourism potential managed by the villagers/local community to help improve the local economy. It should not only focus on destinations owned by investors from outside Batu or privately-owned destinations.

There are also those who expressed their opinions through the Group Discussion Forum that the development of local community production and the coaching of MSMEs owned by local residents of Batu City Tourism by the Batu City Tourism Government is felt to be not yet optimal.

Sustainable tourism should ensure the fair distribution of economic benefits, not only for large businesses but also for local SMEs and tourist villages scattered throughout the City of Batu. Bumiaji and Tulungrejo Tourism Villages have successfully utilized apple agro-tourism and dairy products to boost the local economy. Tourism Villages in several other villages have successfully taken advantage of natural conditions to become equally attractive tourist destinations.

The Batu City Tourism Government can strengthen its efforts by providing training in tourism business management and access to digital markets, as well as facilitating cooperation with investors or large tourism industry operators in sharing events and visitors.

#### **Social Contribution (X3 → Y)**

Quantitative analysis in the research statistically X3 is not significant ( $\beta=0.11$ ; Sig.=0.054), although there is a moderate positive correlation ( $r=0.59$ ). This means that the social contribution has not yet been optimized as a driver of sustainable tourism.

Qualitative analysis in the research interviews with community figures reveal a sense of pride in cultural festivals, which are among the tourist attractions. However, direct interviews also uncovered many comments from some community members complaining that cultural activities are still largely dominated by the City Government and the Batu Major Tourism Industry in their implementation, which naturally results in limited community participation, even though they also experience the impacts and benefits.

Strengthening community-based tourism (CBT) is key so that the community is not merely a spectator, but a main actor by advancing the potential of local cultural wisdom. The Apple Harvest Festival, which is directly managed by the village community, serves as an example of good practice, whereas in

large events like Batu Flower Garden and the Cultural Parade, community involvement is still limited to workers rather than managers.

#### **Environmental Conservation (X4 → Y)**

Quantitative analysis in the research X4 has a significant effect ( $\beta=0.19$ ; Sig.=0.007;  $r=0.65$ ). However, the mean value (3.42) is lower compared to other variables, indicating that there are still challenges in conservation implementation.

Qualitative analysis in the research observations at several destinations show that the volume of plastic waste remains high, especially during weekends. Environmental enthusiasts believe that tourist education and the seriousness of the managers are still lacking. Some respondents also mentioned that the Tourism Managers often neglect proper waste and water sanitation management, prioritize AMDAL (Environmental Impact Assessment), and do not merely pursue profit.

Some other respondents expressed the opinion that the tourist attractions promoted in Batu City should pay more attention to nature, ecology, and environmental pollution control, including air pollution, because a lush natural environment, clean surroundings, cool air free from pollution, and good waste management are more appealing than artificial attractions that only pollute the environment.

The support from the Batu tourism city government, which comes in the form of training without guidance, has only been ceremonial, without having a better impact on the community and the environment of Batu tourism city.

Conservation must be made a requirement for tourism business permits. Destination managers are required to have programs for waste banks, greening, or water conservation. In addition, the community and residents of Batu Tourism City need to be educated by increasing socialization in waste control and the management of a clean and healthy environment.

The waste bank program in Tulungrejo Village successfully reduced plastic waste by up to 30% per month. However, in Coban Talun, waste issues remain a major complaint of tourists. Meanwhile, the Batu City Tourism Government has not yet developed a modern and healthy Waste Management Facility that can handle the increasing volume of waste generated by tourism.

#### **Business Strategy and Collaboration (X5 → Y)**

Quantitative analysis in the research X5 is significant ( $\beta=0.20$ ; Sig.=0.005;  $r=0.68$ ). This means that business strategy and stakeholder collaboration drive tourism sustainability.

Qualitative analysis in the research FGDs with business actors mentioned that collaboration between hotels, travel agents, tourism managers, and other supporting tourism businesses is not yet optimal, as they still tend to compete.

Academics added that research and innovation in tourism products are still limited and have not dominated, especially local creative products that can be used as a basis for developing the Creative Industry in Batu Tourism City.

Some respondents who provided notes on the questionnaire they filled out wrote: Maximizing the production and marketing of local SMEs in the tourist city of Batu in the field of tourism.

There is a need for regular collaboration forums based on the Quadruple Helix to be established, namely good cooperation among tourism managers in the City of Batu Tourism, by creating tourism product innovations through sharing roles and economic benefits.

With the increasing collaboration between the Batu City Tourism Government and several universities in Malang Raya, especially tourism colleges/politechniques, with the Association of Tourism Managers and Entrepreneurs in Batu City, with the Batu City Hotel and Restaurant Association, with Tourism Villages, and with MSMEs in Batu City in the context of sustainable tourism potential management cooperation. It will also create synergy among all parties, generating tourism product innovations and attractions for Batu City through academic forums as well as collaborative partnerships.

#### **Sustainability Management (X6 → Y)**

Quantitative analysis in the research X6 is the most dominant variable ( $\beta=0.24$ ; Sig.=0.001;  $r=0.74$ ). The mean value is also high (3.95). This indicates that tourism sustainability is highly determined by continuous planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Qualitative analysis in the research interviews with academics revealed that Batu Tourism City already has an RIPPDA document, but the challenge lies in the consistency of implementation across different regional heads' terms.

From the officials of the Batu City Tourism Office, information was obtained that regulations on Enhancing Sustainable Tourism Potential in Batu City include: Batu City Mayor Regulation No. 4/2023 concerning the Implementation of Batu City Regional Regulation No. 4/2024.

Sustainability management must be made into binding legal documents (regional regulations or mayoral regulations) so that it does not depend on changing leadership. Policies regarding visit targets, event efficiency, promotion, and innovation are operational or planning policies, which are not always institutionalized as new regulations when regional or mayoral regulations are established.

The "Sustainable Batu City Educational Tourism" program, initiated in 2023, could serve as a master plan if integrated with RIPPDA and implemented across stakeholders, ensuring that tourism sustainability in Batu City can be maintained even if it is not yet optimal.

#### **Synthesis of Discussion**

The findings of this study confirm that:

- X1 → Participatory policies enhance legitimacy.
- X2 → The economy is the main pillar of public support.
- X3 → Socio-cultural aspects need to be strengthened even though not statistically significant.
- X4 → The environment is an absolute prerequisite for sustainability.
- X5 → Innovative collaboration increases competitiveness.
- X6 → Sustainability management is the most dominant variable.

Implications in the research Batu Tourism City Government can strengthen participation-based regulations, support tourism MSMEs, expand local cultural festivals, reinforce village-based conservation, regularly establish Quadruple

Helix forums, and ensure that RIPPDA is consistently implemented across government agencies.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The results of the study show that good governance-based tourism policies have a significant effect on sustainability, where transparency, accountability, and participation strengthen policy legitimacy and stakeholder trust. Economically, the tourism sector contributes greatly to increasing regional income, creating jobs, and strengthening local SMEs, although the distribution of benefits is still uneven. The social aspect has not shown quantitative significance, but qualitatively it plays an important role in strengthening cultural identity and community cohesion. Overall, six independent variables (X1–X6) explain 67% of the variation in sustainable tourism in Batu City, indicating that this research model is relevant and comprehensive. Although the social aspect is not quantitatively significant, qualitative findings confirm its fundamental role in supporting sustainability. Thus, the integration of participatory policies, inclusive economic distribution, cultural preservation, environmental conservation, strategic collaboration, and sustainable management are key to realizing sustainable tourism in Batu City.

Recommendations for the Batu City Government Strengthen the consistency of tourism policies with RIPPDA through transparent and participatory evaluations. Economic benefits need to be more evenly distributed by supporting MSMEs and the creative economy. Socio-cultural aspects can be strengthened through the development of festivals and the promotion of local identity, while the environmental dimension requires waste management and green tourism education. Quadruple Helix collaboration between the government, academics, business actors, and the community needs to be optimized to encourage innovation, and the implementation of data-based sustainable management is important to ensure that tourism governance remains consistent and adaptive.

## **ADVANCED RESEARCH**

This study has several limitations, including a scope that is limited to the Batu City Tourism area and the use of cross-sectional data, which does not fully describe long-term dynamics. In addition, several socio-cultural variables have not been measured in depth in the quantitative analysis, thus requiring a further qualitative approach.

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